

June 26, 2012

Weekly Views

Putnamville Correctional Facility's first offender graduates of the Prison Greyhound program were awarded certificates during a greyhound volunteer meeting. A bitter sweet moment, the graduates also said good bye to Rosie, Gordy, and Dillinger the facility's first greyhound residents. The friendly canines were adopted by members of the community. Staff and offenders anxiously await the arrival of the new greyhound companions.

In partnership with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), staff and offenders at the Branchville Correctional Facility have built 17 cabins for the Deam State and Starve Hollow Recreation Areas. The DNR Division of Forestry provides an array of materials and funding needed to produce and transport the cabins

from inside the secure facility perimeter where they are manufactured to the camp sites, and the facility provides the pine logs, which are harvested directly from the IDOC property, and labor force needed for the construction. With an additional 8 cabins slated to be delivered to Starve Hollow later this summer, the product of this partnership has led to an increase in visitation at the State Parks and has created a substantial number of offender jobs for our population.

136 Wabash Valley Correctional Facility offenders donned caps and gowns, receiving certificates, diplomas or degrees, to the strains of Pomp and Circumstance. Family members were in attendance to witness this important milestone in the re-entry process and the Departments' efforts to further reduce recidivism.

A commencement ceremony at Putnamville Correctional Facility was held for 269 graduates of GED, Vocational Trades, and Associate and Bachelor's degree programs. The Keynote speaker, Dr. Ann Valentine, Ivy Tec Chancellor, gave a motivational speech encouraging students to "put what they've learned to good use."

The Logansport Juvenile Correctional Facility held a CLIFF graduation for seven students who completed the program. This was the facility's 48th group to graduate the program, bringing the total number of graduates to 338 since its opening in October 2005.

Oakland City University held their last college graduation at the Indiana Women's Prison (IWP). The ceremony celebrated 20 Associate degrees and 11 Bachelor's degrees. Each graduate was given the opportunity to invite seven visitors, including children, and were seated "family-style" for a graduation meal of fried chicken, corn, green beans, corn muffins, ice tea, and cake. The graduation theme centered on the book, "Before you Leap," by Kermit the frog, a character from The Muppets. This occasion also served as a reunion for former Oakland City employees and professors and former IWP employees. There were forty-two inmates that helped with cooking, cleaning, and other preparations. Congratulations to the IWP graduating Class of 2012!

The Indiana State Prison celebrated its annual Family Day Open House. Approximately 400 staff and family members enjoyed the warm sunny day along with elephant ears, hamburgers and hot dogs cooked on the grill. Vendors, staff, and their families enjoyed the demonstrations by the facility's Emergency Squad Units. Horse drawn carriage rides, numerous healthcare displays, and four children's bicycle give-aways were just a few of the many activities available for enjoyment. Superintendent Bill Wilson took time to help raise donations for a local food bank by volunteering to be one of the staff in the dunk tank. Superintendent Wilson was "high and dry" for just a short while, raising a total of \$108. Over 100 staff and family members toured the facility. Many comments were received about the awesome job done by the facility's Employee Appreciation Planning Committee (EAPC) in planning the event.

The PLUS Unit at the Putnamville Correctional Facility held a pizza sale for the offender population. Coordinated by Casework Manager Karumathil Kumaran, over 1259 orders were filled generating \$3,777 that will be used for program supplies and community donations.

Eight residents from the Indianapolis Re-Entry Educational Facility participated in the Near Eastside Englewood Community cleanup. Residents cleared trash from the streets and helped set up for Englewood's Pogue's Run and Community Festival. The proceeds from these fundraisers go into a housing scholarship which assists low-income and formerly homeless families attain permanent quality housing.

Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility Superintendent Linda Commons announced the promotion of Sergeant Heather Ehle to Correctional Lieutenant. Superintendent Commons states, "Lieutenant Ehle has a positive leadership style that will impact our facility."

The Logansport Juvenile Correctional Facility CLIFF unit presented its Student Talking About Recovery (STAR) program to a group of IVY Tech nursing students. The facility and the CLIFF program have been working with IVY Tech for the past few years in delivering this program to the students in their nursing program.

Miami Correctional Facility celebrated a U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) graduation for 75 successful completers of the largest USDOL program in the IDOC. Commissioner Bruce Lemmon noted that while most offenders who return to the Department are unemployed, these graduates are now much more likely to succeed upon their release because of how the men not only have learned a trade but have learned how to work. As he offered his congratulations, Superintendent Mark Sevier shared how proud he was of all the hard work these men have done to complete their USDOL programs